

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: HEALTH SERVICES

DATE: OCTOBER 31, 2007

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS MASON
SHEEHAN
HASKELL
F. THOMAS
TESSIER

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS CHAMPAGNE
SOKOL

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT:

PATRICIA AUER, DIRECTOR, HEALTH SERVICES
GINELLE JONES, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, PUBLIC HEALTH
SHARON SCHALDONE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, HOME CARE
TAWN DRISCOLL, FISCAL MANAGER

HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL SERVICES

JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD

AMANDA ALLEN, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Mason called the meeting of the Health Services Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Tessier and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the October 3, 2007 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Patricia Auer, Director of Health Services, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members. *A copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Mrs. Auer apprised that the first agenda item referred to pandemic flu planning and she noted that an activity report for the month of October was included in the agenda packet. She added that many meetings and exercises occurred in relation to this program and they were now beginning preparations to meet the deliverables for the Emergency Preparedness Grant requirements.

Moving to the next agenda item, Mrs. Auer reminded the Committee members that during their last meeting it had been determined that she should solicit advice from DPW Fleet Management regarding the development of an RFP (Request for Proposal) for vehicle purchases, in light of a number of issues experienced with the Ford Focus vehicles purchased from State contract for 2007. She apprised that upon discussing the matter with Bruce Belden, Auto Mechanic Supervisor, the Chevrolet Cobalt had been suggested as a suitable replacement because it was considered the new version of the Chevrolet Cavalier, which they had been very happy with in the past. Mrs. Auer added that the Chevrolet Cobalt was included on State contract, thereby eliminating the need to develop an RFP. She noted that they had refrained from purchasing Chevrolet Cobalts for 2007 because the Consumer Reports rating had been better for the Ford Focus. Mrs. Auer summarized that upon the suggestion of Mr. B. Belden, and due to their past satisfaction with the Chevrolet Cavalier, the Chevrolet Cobalt would be the vehicle of choice for purchase in 2008 from State contract.

Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, pointed out that it was his understanding that all funding for vehicle purchases for the Health Services Department had been removed from the 2008 Budget. Mrs. Auer countered that she was aware that their original request for funding to purchase five new vehicles had been reduced to three but she was not aware that the funding had been removed altogether. She stated that if the funding for new vehicle purchases was removed completely, the budget for vehicle repairs and maintenance would have to be increased to maintain the current fleet. Tawn Driscoll, Fiscal

Manager, pointed out that funding for one of the vehicles they intended to purchase had been included under a program that would receive full State reimbursement. Mr. Payne advised that they would have a better picture of what had been removed from the Budget subsequent to the Adjourned Board meeting scheduled for November 2nd, when the 2008 Tentative Budget was presented for adoption.

Returning to the agenda review, Mrs. Auer apprised that the presentation on transfats would be postponed once again as, unfortunately, Laura Saffer, Health Educator, who had developed the presentation, had recently undergone emergency surgery and would be out of work for several weeks. She noted that Dan Durkee, Health Educator, had a previously scheduled community presentation and was unavailable to make the presentation. Therefore, Mrs. Auer stated, Mr. Mason and Mr. Payne had determined that the presentation would be postponed; however, she added, she hoped that it could be made at the next Committee meeting, although it would depend on the length of the agenda.

Mrs. Auer stated that the next agenda item referred to the POD (Point of Distribution) Drill discussed at the previous Committee meeting and she introduced Ginelle Jones, Assistant Director of Public Health, to address this item. Ms. Jones apprised that it was now official that NYSDOH (New York State Department of Health) would be supplying doses of the flu vaccine free of charge to Warren County for use in a POD Drill, allowing vaccinations to be offered to employees and their spouses/partners at no cost. She explained that the POD Drill was scheduled for Thursday, November 15 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. and would be the only opportunity to receive free vaccinations. Ms. Jones noted pointed out that for this drill an employee audience had been chosen because in the past other groups had been targeted with unsuccessful results. She added that this would also be a valuable training experience for volunteers because they would be given listings of jobs, expectations and instruction shortly before the drill, as if it were an actual pandemic outbreak. Mrs. Auer stated that those employees unable to attend the POD Drill would have the ability to schedule an appointment for vaccination at another time; however, she added, there would be a fee for the vaccination.

Mr. Haskell entered the meeting at 9:39 a.m.

Mr. Tessier asked if they could bill the insurance of those employees receiving the vaccination at the POD Drill and Ms. Jones replied that they could not because the doses were being donated by the State at no charge.

Mr. Payne asked if a shortage of the flu vaccination was anticipated and Mrs. Auer replied in the negative. She added that the Health Department was receiving a great response for vaccinations as they offered them at a lesser cost than many other providers.

Resuming the agenda review, Mrs. Auer reminded the Committee that at their last meeting it was unclear as to whether or not the State intended to forward the entire amount of grant funding awarded to the WIC (Women Infants and Children) Program earlier in the year. She said that initially it had been advised that there would be a shortage of \$59,174 from the total promised; however, upon inviting a representative from the State WIC Program to attend the Health Services Committee meeting and explain the deficit, she was informed that the total grant amount would be honored, as long as the "Appendix X" was signed and returned to the State by the close of business on November 14, 2007. In light of this, Mrs. Auer apprised, the agenda included a resolution request to ratify the action taken by the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, in executing the Appendix X, and also to authorize the acceptance of the grant funds in the total amount of \$59,174.00 in the form of "Appendices" for the WIC Program, thereby bringing the total contract amount

for the WIC contract year October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007 to \$402,071.00.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Tessier and carried unanimously to approve the request to ratify the actions taken by the Chairman of the Board as outlined above and amending Resolution No. 353 of 2007 which authorized the original contract amount and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Mrs. Auer directed the Committee to the New Business section of the agenda and she explained that the first item was a request to amend the contract with GHI (Group Health Incorporated) to include the Family Plus Program (FHP PPO) and Commercial PPO, which were offered to individuals as part of GHI's benefit options. She noted that the rates were negotiated periodically to cover the Health Department's costs and, based on previous resolution, Committee approval would not be required each time the rates were increased. Mrs. Auer stated that this would allow for the receipt of reimbursement for individuals covered by this insurance option and receiving services from their agency.

Motion was made by Mr. F. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Tessier and carried unanimously to approve the request to amend the contract held with GHI as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

The next new business item, Mrs. Auer apprised, referred to COLA (Cost of Living Allowances) for NYSDOH contractual grants. She explained that the grants were all received annually with the grant year running from April 1, 2007 through March 31, 2007. Mrs. Auer stated that the total amount to be received in COLA funding was \$5,237 and was to be used for staff recruitment and retention of staff or other non-personal service costs. She outlined the specific COLA amounts as follows:

- 1) Early Intervention Administration: Contract #: C-021829: Amount \$2,157;
- 2) Children With Special Health Care Needs: Contract #:C-021586: Amount \$956;
- 3) Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program: Contract#:C-020637: Amount \$1,290;
- 4) Immunization Program: Contract#C-018698: Amount \$834.00.

Motion was made by Mr. F. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Tessier and carried unanimously to approve all four requests to authorize the receipt of COLA funding as outlined above and the necessary resolutions were authorized for the November 16th Board meeting. *Copies of all four requests are on file with the minutes.*

Mrs. Auer advised that the next new business item consisted of a resolution request to allow Kathleen Meath, RN (Registered Nurse), to attend the 2008 National Immunization Conference at the Hilton Atlanta in Atlanta, Georgia on March 17 - 20, 2008. She noted that NYSACHO (New York State Association of County Health Officials) would be funding all costs including conference, travel, lodging and meal fees. Mrs. Auer added that the only responsibility of Warren County would be to pay the employee's salary for the days she was attending the conference. She explained that this was an important annual conference especially in light of the fact that immunization schedules and vaccines changed frequently. Mrs. Auer further explained that the conference provided the most recent information available as well as what was anticipated for the future.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas and carried unanimously to approve Out-of-State travel for Ms. Meath to attend the 2008 National Immunization Conference as outlined above and the

necessary resolution was authorized for the November 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Moving on, Mrs. Auer stated that the next agenda item referred to a request for Committee approval to ratify the actions taken by Mr. Mason, as Chairman of the Health Services Committee, to approve the use of Budget funds to cover the costs of food for the "Hotwash" Debriefing/Evaluation subsequent to the Skye Farm Drill on October 28, 2007. She explained that the total needed to cover those costs would not exceed \$400.00 and was available through the use of Emergency Preparedness Grant Funds. Mrs. Auer noted that this exercise had not been anticipated and had included a number of community agencies and volunteers. She added that although this had been a routine emergency drill, it had also served as a County-wide emergency preparedness opportunity.

Motion was made by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas and carried unanimously to lend Committee approval and ratification of the actions taken by Mr. Mason in authorizing the use of funds as outlined above.

Mrs. Auer apprised that the next new business item pertained to a request to renew the contract with Greater Adirondack Home Aides, Inc. for the year commencing January 1, 2008 and terminating December 31, 2008. She noted that this contract renewal would allow the purchase of Home Health Aide and Personal Care Aide services at the following per hour of service rates:

- ~Home Health Aide: \$25.54/hour (a 2% increase - \$25.04/hour in 2007)
- ~Personal Care Aide: \$25.28/hour (a 2% increase - \$24.79/hour in 2007)

Mrs. Auer explained that as per information received from John Penzer, CEO of Greater Adirondack, the aides received a 3% salary increase annually and in 2008 they would receive a \$10.00 per month increase toward their health insurance and an increase in the merit performance bonus from \$200.00 to \$225.00 in addition to the 3% salary increase, as well as an additional paid holiday for July 4th.

Motion was made by Mr. Tessier, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously to approve the request to renew the contract with Greater Adirondack Home Aides, Inc. at the rates indicated above for the term commencing January 1, 2008 and terminating December 31, 2008 and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Mrs. Auer apprised that during the past several weeks, she had been in conversation with John Rugge, MD, regarding the new round of funding for Community Health Care Technology Adoption Collaborative, which included funding for the technology infrastructure. She explained that this effort would allow for the development of the capability to connect health care providers to patient information at the point of care in real time. With this funding, Mrs. Auer stated, the Warren County Health Services Department was eligible for inclusion in the program, unlike the previous initiative which had focused primarily on Community Health Centers. She said that it was Dr. Rugge's feeling that in light of the Telehealth, Wound Care and Point of Care Initiative programs planned for the coming year, the Department was in a great position to be included in the funding proposal. In addition, Mrs. Auer noted, Dr. Rugge had advised that he had spoken with Mr. W. Thomas and Mr. Monroe at the Inter-County Legislative Committee Meeting, and they were also interested in involving Warren County in the process. She stated that this was an incredibly exciting and cutting edge opportunity for the County.

Mrs. Auer advised that she had sent a letter, without formal commitment, at the suggestion of Dr. Rugge, stating her Department's interest in joining the Healthcare Information Xchange of New York (HIXNY), the newly emerging Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO) of the Capital District. Mrs. Auer distributed copies of the letter to Committee members, *a copy of which is on file with the minutes*, and she advised that she would keep the Committee apprised of any new developments with respect to this matter.

Resuming the agenda review, Mrs. Auer stated that the next agenda item referred to a request to authorize a new contract with Catherine Fassell Meehan to provide physical therapy services. She explained that this would be a revenue generating contract as the visits were reimbursable.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas and carried unanimously to approve the request for a new contract with Catherine Fassell Meehan for physical therapy services and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Mrs. Auer advised that the next agenda items pertained to a request for a transfer of funds as well as the Report of Revenues and Expenditures and she asked Ms. Driscoll to discuss these items.

Ms. Driscoll explained that the transfer was intended for the purchase of a DVD player for the Bioterrorism Department and she outlined the request as follows:

From Code:	A.4189 220 Bioterrorism - Office Equipment
To Code:	A.4189 410 Bioterrorism - Supplies Expense
Amount:	\$163

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Tessier and carried unanimously to approve the request for transfer of funds as outlined above and refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Continuing to the Report of Revenues and Expenditures, Ms. Driscoll apprised that in most areas expenditures were on target; however, she noted, overages in overtime costs continued to be an issue. She pointed out that the report included the 2007 Accrued Revenues total of \$5,353,179 and this figure reflected billings only through July of 2007.

Mr. Haskell asked if the 2007 Budget Revenue figure of \$11,384,787 would be realized and Ms. Driscoll replied affirmatively, noting that billings had been posted only through July. She added that it was her feeling that the revenues budgeted would be met as a good part of the fiscal year was not included in this figure, nor anticipated grant funding.

Mrs. Auer apprised that every year, as part of the Tobacco Program, they utilized the data gathered by the Council for Prevention in order to monitor smoking trends for reduction in schools. She said that these studies were performed in each school with data reported for each, and the cost for this process was \$2,000. Mrs. Auer stated that in consideration of the new purchase order regulations she wanted to be sure that the Committee was aware of the expenditure, although Mr. Payne had advised that a purchase order was not necessary.

Mr. Haskell asked if the tobacco use data was gender specific and Mrs. Auer replied that she was unsure. Mr.

Haskell asked Mrs. Auer to check on this and if it was not the case could the survey include such results for 2008.

Mrs. Auer stated that the Committee members might also have heard recent news concerning MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus bacteria) issues being reported in surrounding schools and communities. She advised that MRSA was not new and had been around for some time. Mrs. Auer added that MRSA was not reportable to the NYSDOH but, unfortunately, the condition had caused a death; however, she noted, it was likely that the deceased had probably suffered from other pre-disposing issues that led to their expiration. She said that the Queensbury School District had recently issued a letter stating that they had discovered a second case of MRSA but, she noted, this had not been laboratory confirmed. Mrs. Auer apprised that a positive outcome of the media attention would be the increased cleaning measures taken at surrounding schools and public buildings. She added that it would also serve as an opportunity to increase awareness about proper hygiene measures.

Ms. Jones noted that in addition to preparing a MRSA information packet for distribution to schools and physicians, they had also received many telephone calls questioning the condition. She added that Mr. Durkee had personally delivered informational packets to each of the schools. Ms. Jones stated that physicians, schools and athletic directors seemed to be up to date on the topic, it was simply the general public and the media that seemed to be unsure of the condition.

Mr. Mason stated that it was very good that the Department had reacted to the MRSA issue and Mrs. Auer replied that she was very happy with the way in which her staff had been handling the matter, noting that they had received telephone calls from both radio and television stations asking for information. Sharon Schaldone, Assistant Director of Health Care, advised that in order to avoid any MRSA issues one only had to remember to wash their hands well and frequently.

Discussion ensued with respect to MRSA.

Mrs. Auer apprised that in past Committee meetings during executive session they had been discussing the Fiscal Manager position and the fact that the duties required of the position were quite astronomical considering the increased technology that would be required for the Point of Care Initiative. She said that while the IT (Information Technology) Department had been very helpful and would continue to be needed in the future, they would not be able to provide all of the time and effort that would be required. Mrs. Auer stated that she had met with Mr. Payne and Nick Caimano, Budget Officer, to discuss the matter and they had reached the conclusion that a new position should be created in light of these needs. She explained that a Senior Clerk had recently resigned from her Department and they would not request permission to fill that position, in light of the fact that they anticipated a reduction in the need for clerical positions once the Point of Care program was implemented and the funding for this position would aid in supporting the new position they wished to create.

Mrs. Auer further explained that new programs would require personnel knowledgeable of the technology systems and able to become involved in the day-to-day needs of the program. By not filling the Senior Clerk position and reducing Medical Director contracts, through conversion to a fee-for-service basis, Mrs. Auer apprised that they would have increased funding to support the new position. In addition, she said that they would institute an accountability log for the Medical Director services to show exactly what was received for County dollars. By implementing these measures, Mrs. Auer advised that they would reduce the amount

spent for Medical Director contracts by approximately \$4,000 per year and would also recoup 38% in State aid, which would be about \$21,000. She noted that only \$7,000 would be needed to support the new position, over and above the funds gained from other areas within the Budget, to provide fiscal and information services to maximize systems and the receipt of grant funding.

In response to Mr. Sheehan's question, Ms. Auer explained that a title had not yet been created for this position but she had used the base salary of the Assistant Director to determine the salary for this position. She noted that she had spoken with representatives at Russell Sage College and discovered that there was a program for a major in Informatics which was a combination of nursing, computer and financial skills.

Mr. Payne stated that this was a very good way to fund the new position and because of the new Point of Care program they would need a person able to speak with doctors and medical centers who would understand medical terms as well as the billing and computerization processes involved.

Discussion ensued.

It was the consensus of the Committee that Mrs. Auer should continue to substantiate this position by meeting with Richard Kelly, Personnel Officer, to develop an approved title for this position, then returning to the Committee for further permissions to proceed in creating this new position for implementation in 2008.

Returning to the topic of fleet vehicles, Mr. F. Thomas asked if the funding for the vehicles requested in the 2008 Budget was needed. Mrs. Auer replied that in a prior year when funding was removed from the Budget for fleet vehicles there had been disastrous results due to a lack of available vehicles. She said that the fleet needed to continually turnover to keep it working efficiently and in conferring with DPW Fleet Management with respect to what could reasonably be cut to decrease the Budget, she had been advised that the number of vehicles sought should be reduced to no less than three to meet this need.

Mr. Tessier asked what the average number of miles accumulated on each fleet vehicle was annually and Mrs. Auer replied that she did not have these numbers but DPW Fleet Management would. Ms. Schaldone estimated that 30,000 miles per year were being accumulated and in reviewing the fleet more than half of the vehicles had accumulated around 65,000 miles while a third were over 100,000. She stated that the cars usually required repairs around the 65,000 mile mark. Ms. Schaldone noted that a lack of usable vehicles would lead to issues in retention as pay rates for nurses were higher in other places and if forced to use their own vehicles, some of the nursing staff may choose to work elsewhere.

Mr. Payne confirmed that all funding for fleet vehicles had been removed for 2008 and \$36,950 had been retained for auto repairs and maintenance. Mr. Mason stated that it was important to maintain the fleet each year in order to avoid issues such as the DPW was experiencing with highway equipment. Ms. Driscoll stated that when asked to reduce the Budget initially, they had reduced their request by the value of two cars and had increased the repair budget by \$5,000 in light of anticipated repairs to the older cars maintained in the fleet and she said that based on Mr. Payne's statement she felt that the repair budget should be increased further. However, Ms. Driscoll noted, it was her opinion that they should be updating the fleet by no less than two vehicles per year to maintain an acceptable vehicle fleet. Ms. Schaldone pointed out that during the last year in which they had been denied funding for the purchase of new vehicles they had been forced to rent vehicles when the older ones were out of service for repairs.

Discussion ensued with respect to fleet vehicles.

Mr. Payne pointed out that DPW equipment and vehicle purchases were going to be bonded for 2008 and they might consider including the \$36,000 required for the purchase of three fleet vehicles on a three-year term.

Motion was made by Mr. Tessier, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas and carried unanimously to add funding for three fleet vehicles back into the Health Services Department Budget.

Mr. Haskell asked that for the next Committee meeting a listing of fleet vehicles along with their age, mileage and brand be prepared and that Mr. B. Belden and William Lamy, DPW Superintendent, be asked to attend to explain fleet vehicles issues.

Mr. Payne stated that he felt too much employee time was wasted in transferring fleet vehicles to the Warrensburg DPW Shop for oil changes and repairs. He suggested that they might consider utilizing a portion of the garage located in the maintenance building at the Municipal Center for oil changes to avoid these additional costs. Mr. Haskell agreed with Mr. Payne's suggestion and he added that one of the Auto Mechanics should be moved to a 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. shift to perform the oil changes so that none of the vehicles would be out of service during the hours the vehicles were used by staff.

Ms. Jones noted that the Sheriff's Office had a bay that they used for car washing and she suggested that car washes could be provided at this location also to save transport time.

Discussion ensued.

As there was no further business to come before the Health Services Committee, on motion by Mr. Haskell and seconded by Mr. Tessier, Mr. Mason adjourned the meeting at 10:23 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Allen, Legislative Office Specialist